

# **“RRAFT ADVISORY COMMITTEE”**

## **MEETING # 7 MINUTES**

**Thursday, December 13, 2007**

**6:30 – 9:00 PM**

**FWP Region 2 Office**

**3201 Spurgin Road**

**Missoula**

- **Opening, Staff Announcement and Progress Report**

*-Chet Crowser ~ River Recreation Manager*

-Chet opened the meeting and introduced Molly Wainwright, the new Blackfoot River Ranger. Chet then provided a recap of the work done by a single subcommittee to complete the task of developing management actions for each problem statement. All of the management actions, their corresponding problem statements and the recreation settings for each river reach were compiled in a comprehensive document and provided to committee members for review. This document will serve as a reference during committee discussions aimed at developing final recommendations for management actions. The document will also be used to inform staff as they begin to outline and write parts of the management plan. These parts of the management plan will be presented to the committee for review as they are fleshed out, with some parts becoming available possibly as soon as the January 7 RRAFT meeting.

- **Committee Discussion – Desired Conditions for Reach Five**

*-Charlie Sperry ~ FWP Recreation Management Specialist*

-Charlie prepared the committee for a discussion regarding the desired recreation conditions for reach five (Roundup FAS to Johnsrud FAS). Handouts were given to committee members that outlined ground rules and framed the discussion with the following questions:

- Do you want the opportunity to socialize and recreate in the presence of prevalent human activity?
  - High number of people on the river and at access sites.
  - Opportunity to socialize with other people is important.
  - Moments of solitude, tranquility and nature appreciation are less important.
- Do you want the opportunity to experience solitude, tranquility, and nature?
  - Human activity is less frequent.
  - Opportunity to socialize with other people is less important.
  - Moments of solitude, tranquility and nature appreciation are important.

Each member of the committee was given an opportunity to provide input to the group and the discussion resulted in the following suggestions and discussion points.

1. **Split reach five into two separate reaches.**

- Splitting the reach may make addressing recreation concerns more manageable.
- Splitting the reach immediately above Whitaker Bridge would be appropriate to accommodate existing differences in use.

- The upper portion of reach five is more conducive to a less social experience and the opportunity for solitude, tranquility and nature should be protected.
- Splitting the reach will preserve multiple recreation opportunities.
- Splitting the reach could be based on differences in ease of access. More access opportunities exist in lower reach five than in upper reach five.
- From a biological standpoint, splitting the reach at Belmont could be appropriate.
- Splitting the reach at Belmont Creek would incorporate use occurring at Belmont Creek and at Red Rocks.

**2. Manage for a more social atmosphere and higher use in lower reach five and a less social and less crowded experience in upper reach five.**

- If use were to be limited in reach five, use and associated problems could move to other areas in the region, increasing the need for some FWP resources.
- The problem only exists for a short time period and limiting use may have unnecessary impacts on the wide array of users.
- Young people looking for a social atmosphere need a place to go and will find alternatives if opportunities are limited.
- High use recreation should not be a “party” atmosphere with inappropriate behaviors. Additional regulations and enforcement to address negative behavior will be necessary to accommodate high use.
- Behavior concerns can be addressed through enforcement with positive results. This has been shown through the results of previous enforcement efforts.
- The expanded upstream “creep” of high use does not seem to be extending beyond Whitaker Bridge at this point in time.
- The objective is to manage for a balance between quality of experience and resource protection.
- It will be necessary to provide a description of what “high use” should look like.
- A social atmosphere may be one way to provide outdoor recreation opportunities to upcoming generations who are geared toward indoor entertainment such as video games and computers.
- It is important to protect the upper reaches of the Blackfoot from high use settings.
- We should prepare and plan for the influence of population growth and the increased demand for recreation.
- Positively educating river users on proper etiquette and how to behave when recreating is important. If people know what the proper action or behavior is, they often will do it.
- It is important to think about the negative consequences as well as the benefits associated with new regulations and enforcement efforts.
- A user fee may not be viable, but charging for parking at access sites may be a way for multiple users to share the cost associated with providing recreational opportunities.
- Protecting the resource is of key importance when managing for high use.

- ***Meeting Adjourned at 9:00 PM***

<p align="center"><b>NEXT MEETING</b>  Monday, January 7, 2008  6:30 pm – 9:00 pm  FWP Region 2 Office  3201 Spurgin Road  Missoula</p>
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